United Nations A/66/L.28

General Assembly

Distr.: Limited
8 December 2011

Original: English

Sixty-sixth session
Agenda item 70 (a)
Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

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Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 and the guiding principles contained in the annex thereto, other relevant General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions and agreed conclusions of the Council,

Noting the reports of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations[1] and on the Central Emergency Response Fund,[2]

Reaffirming the principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence for the provision of humanitarian assistance, and reaffirming also the need for all actors engaged in the provision of humanitarian assistance in situations of complex emergencies and natural disasters to promote and fully respect these principles,

Deeply concerned about global challenges such as the ongoing adverse impact of the world financial and economic crisis and the negative impact of the excessively volatile food prices on food security and about their effect on the

[1] A/66/81-E/2011/117.
[2] A/66/357.

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increasing vulnerability of populations and the impact on the need for and provision of humanitarian assistance,

Emphasizing the need to mobilize adequate, predictable, timely and flexible resources for humanitarian assistance based on and in proportion to assessed needs, with a view to ensuring fuller coverage of the needs in all sectors and across humanitarian emergencies, and recognizing, in this regard, the achievements of the Central Emergency Response Fund,

Reiterating the need for Member States, relevant United Nations organizations and other relevant actors to mainstream a gender perspective into humanitarian assistance, including by addressing the specific needs of women, girls, boys and men in a comprehensive and consistent manner, and to take into account the needs of affected populations, including persons with disabilities,

Expressing its deep concern about the increasing challenges faced by Member States and the United Nations humanitarian response system and their capacities as a result of the consequences of natural disasters, including those related to the continuing impact of climate change, and reaffirming the importance of implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters,[3] inter alia, by providing adequate resources for disaster risk reduction, including investment in disaster preparedness, and working towards building back better in all phases from relief to development,

Recognizing the challenges posed by the magnitude and complexity of recent humanitarian emergencies, in particular to the capacity and coordination of the humanitarian response system,

Recognizing also that building national and local preparedness and response capacity is critical to a more predictable and effective response and contributes to the achievement of humanitarian and development objectives, including enhanced resilience and a reduced need for humanitarian response,

Emphasizing that enhancing international cooperation on emergency humanitarian assistance is essential, and reaffirming its resolution 65/264 of 28 January 2011 on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters,

Emphasizing also the fundamentally civilian character of humanitarian assistance, and, in situations where military capacity and assets are used to support the implementation of humanitarian assistance, reaffirming the need for their use to be undertaken with the consent of the affected State and in conformity with international law, including international humanitarian law, as well as humanitarian principles,

Condemning the increasing number of deliberate threats and violent attacks against humanitarian personnel and facilities, and noting the negative implications for the provision of humanitarian assistance to populations in need,

Recognizing the high number of persons affected by humanitarian emergencies, including internally displaced persons, bearing in mind their particular needs, and welcoming, in this regard, the adoption and ongoing process of ratification of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of

[3] A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2.

Internally Displaced Persons in Africa,[4] which marks a significant step towards strengthening the national and regional normative framework for the protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons in Africa,

Recognizing also the importance of the Geneva Conventions of 1949,[5] which include a vital legal framework for the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, including the provision of humanitarian assistance,

Noting with grave concern that violence, including gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence, and violence against children, continues to be deliberately directed against civilian populations in many emergency situations,

Noting with appreciation the efforts that the United Nations continues to make to improve humanitarian response, including by strengthening humanitarian response capacities, improving humanitarian coordination, enhancing predictable and adequate funding and strengthening the accountability of all stakeholders, and recognizing the importance of strengthening emergency administrative procedures and funding to allow for an effective and needs-based response to emergencies,

Recognizing that, in strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance in the field, United Nations organizations should continue to work in close coordination with national Governments,

Welcoming the sixtieth anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees[6] and the fiftieth anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness,[7]

Reaffirming the importance of humanitarian assistance by the United Nations system, and welcoming the twentieth anniversary of its resolution 46/182,

1. *Welcomes* the outcome of the fourteenth humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2011;[8]

2. *Requests* the Emergency Relief Coordinator to continue her efforts to strengthen the coordination and accountability of humanitarian assistance and leadership within the United Nations humanitarian response system, including through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, and calls upon relevant United Nations organizations and other relevant intergovernmental organizations, as well as other humanitarian and development actors, to continue to work with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat to enhance the coordination, effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance;

3. *Also requests* the Emergency Relief Coordinator to improve dialogue with Member States on the relevant processes, activities and deliberations of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee;

4. *Calls upon* the relevant organizations of the United Nations system and, as appropriate, other relevant humanitarian actors to continue efforts to improve the humanitarian response to natural and man-made disasters and complex emergencies

[4] Available from www.africa-union.org.

[5] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, Nos. 970-973.

[6] Ibid., vol. 189, No. 2545.

[7] Ibid., vol. 989, No. 14458.

[8] See A/66/3. For the final text, see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 3*.

by further strengthening humanitarian response capacities at all levels, by continuing to strengthen the provision and coordination of humanitarian assistance at the global and field level, including through existing cluster coordination mechanisms, and in support of national authorities of the affected State, as appropriate, and by further enhancing efficiency, transparency, performance and accountability;

5. *Recognizes* the benefits of engagement and coordination with relevant humanitarian actors to the effectiveness of humanitarian response, and encourages the United Nations to continue to pursue efforts to strengthen partnerships at the global level with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, relevant humanitarian non-governmental organizations and other participants in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue strengthening the support provided to United Nations resident/humanitarian coordinators and to United Nations country teams, including by providing necessary training, identifying resources and improving the identification of and the selection process for United Nations resident/humanitarian coordinators, and enhancing their performance accountability;

7. *Calls upon* the Chair of the United Nations Development Group and the Emergency Relief Coordinator to enhance their consultations before presenting final recommendations on the selection process for resident coordinators in countries likely to require significant humanitarian response operations;

8. *Reaffirms* the importance of implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters,[3] and takes note with appreciation of the midterm review of the Hyogo Framework for Action, the outcome of the third session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Geneva from 8 to 13 May 2011, and the *2011 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*;[4]

9. *Calls upon* Member States and the international community to increase resources for disaster risk reduction measures, including by providing effective, predictable, flexible and adequate funding, where possible, for prevention, mitigation and preparedness for effective response and contingency planning in order to, inter alia, further strengthen national and local capacities to prepare for and respond to humanitarian emergencies, and furthermore encourages closer cooperation between national stakeholders and humanitarian and development actors in this regard;

10. *Urges* Member States, the United Nations and other relevant organizations to take further steps to provide a coordinated emergency response to the food and nutrition needs of affected populations, while aiming to ensure that such steps are supportive of national strategies and programmes aimed at improving food security;

11. *Expresses concern* about the challenges related to, inter alia, safe access to and use of fuel, firewood, alternative energy, water and sanitation, shelter and food, and health-care services in humanitarian emergencies, and takes note with

[4] United Nations publication, Sales No. 11.III.M.1.

appreciation of initiatives at the national and international levels that promote effective cooperation in this regard;

12. *Encourages* the international community, including relevant United Nations organizations and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to support efforts of Member States aimed at strengthening their capacity to prepare for and respond to disasters and to support efforts, as appropriate, to strengthen systems for identifying and monitoring disaster risk, including vulnerability and natural hazards;

13. *Welcomes* the initiatives at the regional and national levels related to the implementation of the Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance,[10] adopted at the Thirtieth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held in Geneva from 26 to 30 November 2007, and encourages Member States and, where applicable, regional organizations to take further steps to strengthen operational and legal frameworks for international disaster relief, taking into account the Guidelines, as appropriate;

14. *Encourages* States to create an enabling environment for the capacity-building of local authorities and of national and local non-governmental and community-based organizations in order to ensure better preparedness in providing timely, effective and predictable humanitarian assistance, and encourages the United Nations and humanitarian organizations to provide support to such efforts, including, as appropriate, through the transfer of technology and expertise to developing countries and through support to programmes aimed at enhancing the coordination capacities of affected States;

15. *Calls upon* United Nations humanitarian entities, other relevant humanitarian organizations, development partners, the private sector, donor countries and the affected State to enhance cooperation and coordination and to continue to utilize and develop appropriate tools with a view to planning and delivering humanitarian assistance in ways that are supportive of early recovery as well as of sustainable rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts;

16. *Encourages* the United Nations system and humanitarian organizations to continue their efforts to mainstream early recovery into humanitarian programming, acknowledges that early recovery should receive further funding, and encourages the provision of timely, flexible and predictable funding for early recovery, including through established humanitarian instruments;

17. *Takes note* of the efforts of Member States, the United Nations system and the international community to strengthen preparedness and local, national and regional humanitarian response capacity, and calls upon the United Nations and relevant partners to continue support in this regard;

18. *Encourages* efforts to provide education in humanitarian emergencies, including in order to contribute to a smooth transition from relief to development;

19. *Calls upon* relevant United Nations organizations to support the improvement of the consolidated appeals process by, inter alia, engaging in the preparation of common needs assessments and common humanitarian action plans,

[10] Available from www.ifrc.org.

including through a better analysis of gender-related allocations, in order to further the development of the process as an instrument for United Nations strategic planning and prioritization, and by involving other relevant humanitarian organizations in the process, while reiterating that consolidated appeals should be prepared in consultation with affected States;

20. *Requests* Member States, relevant humanitarian organizations of the United Nations system and other relevant humanitarian actors to ensure that all aspects of humanitarian response, including disaster preparedness and needs assessments, take into account the specific needs of the affected population, recognizing that giving appropriate consideration to, inter alia, gender, age and disability is part of a comprehensive and effective humanitarian response, and in this regard encourages efforts to ensure gender mainstreaming in the delivery of humanitarian assistance;

21. *Calls upon* United Nations humanitarian organizations, in consultation with Member States, as appropriate, to strengthen the evidence base for humanitarian assistance by further developing common mechanisms to improve the quality, transparency and reliability of, and make further progress towards, common humanitarian needs assessments, including through improved collection, analysis and reporting of sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data to assess their performance in assistance and to ensure the most effective use of humanitarian resources by these organizations;

22. *Calls upon* the United Nations and its humanitarian partners to enhance accountability to Member States, including affected States, and all other stakeholders, and to further strengthen humanitarian response efforts, including by monitoring and evaluating the provision of their humanitarian assistance, incorporating lessons learned into programming and consulting with the affected populations so that their needs are appropriately addressed;

23. *Calls upon* donors to provide adequate, timely, predictable and flexible resources based on and in proportion to assessed needs, including for underfunded emergencies, to consider providing early and multi-year commitments to pooled humanitarian funds and to continue to support diverse humanitarian funding channels, encourages efforts to adhere to the Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship,[11] and in this respect encourages the private sector, civil society and other relevant entities to make relevant contributions, complementary to those of other sources;

24. *Welcomes* the important achievements of the Central Emergency Response Fund in ensuring a more timely and predictable response to humanitarian emergencies, and stresses the importance of continuing to improve the functioning of the Fund in order to ensure that resources are used in the most efficient, effective, accountable and transparent manner possible;

25. *Takes note* with appreciation of the findings of the five-year evaluation of the Central Emergency Response Fund carried out in 2011,[12] in this regard decides to reduce the size of the loan element of the Fund to 30 million United States dollars, and requests that the balance of any funds, including interest earned, above

[11] A/58/99-E/2003/94, annex II.

[12] Available from http://ochaonline.un.org/cerf/WhatistheCERF/EvaluationsandReviews/tabid/5340/language/en-US/Default.aspx.

30 million dollars be placed in the grant element of the Fund and used for that purpose;

26. *Decides* to authorize, in exceptional circumstances and on a time-bound basis, the Emergency Relief Coordinator and relevant operational agencies under the leadership of the Coordinator to utilize the loan element of the Central Emergency Response Fund to enhance, within their respective mandates, rapid response coordination where insufficient capacity exists at the field level;

27. *Calls upon* all Member States and invites the private sector and all concerned individuals and institutions to consider increasing their voluntary contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund, and emphasizes that contributions should be additional to current commitments to humanitarian programming and should not be to the detriment of resources made available for international cooperation for development;

28. *Reiterates* that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs should benefit from adequate and more predictable funding, and calls upon all Member States to consider increasing voluntary contributions;

29. *Reaffirms* the obligation of all States and parties to an armed conflict to protect civilians in armed conflicts in accordance with international humanitarian law, and invites States to promote a culture of protection, taking into account the particular needs of women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities;

30. *Calls upon* States to adopt preventive measures and effective responses to acts of violence committed against civilian populations in armed conflicts and to ensure that those responsible are promptly brought to justice, in accordance with national law and their obligations under international law;

31. *Urges* all Member States to address gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies and to ensure that their laws and institutions are adequate to prevent, promptly investigate and prosecute gender-based violence, and calls upon States, the United Nations and all relevant humanitarian organizations to improve coordination, harmonize response and strengthen capacity, with a view to reducing such violence and ensuring support services to victims of such violence;

32. *Recognizes* the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement[13] as an important international framework for the protection of internally displaced persons, encourages Member States and humanitarian agencies to continue to work together, in collaboration with host communities, in endeavours to provide a more predictable response to the needs of internally displaced persons, and in this regard calls for continued and enhanced international support, upon request, for the capacity-building efforts of States;

33. *Calls upon* all States and parties in complex humanitarian emergencies, in particular in armed conflict and in post-conflict situations, in countries in which humanitarian personnel are operating, in conformity with the relevant provisions of international law and national laws, to cooperate fully with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies and organizations and to ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel, as well as the delivery of supplies and equipment, in order to allow such personnel to efficiently perform their task of

[13] E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, annex.

assisting affected civilian populations, including refugees and internally displaced persons;

34. *Welcomes* the progress made towards further enhancing the security management system of the United Nations, and supports the approach taken by the Secretary-General to focus the security management system on enabling the United Nations system to deliver on its mandates, programmes and activities by effectively managing the risks to which personnel are exposed, including in the provision of humanitarian assistance;

35. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report on actions taken to enable the United Nations to continue to strengthen its ability to recruit and deploy staff quickly and flexibly, to procure emergency relief materials and services rapidly, cost-effectively and locally, where applicable, and to quickly disburse funds in order to support Governments and United Nations country teams in the coordination of international humanitarian assistance;

36. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, through the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2012, on progress made in strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations and to submit a report to the Assembly on the detailed use of the Central Emergency Response Fund.